

الْبَابُ الثَّانِي

الْجِهَادُ بِالنَّفْسِ

CHAPTER TWO

JIHĀD BI'N-NAFS—STRUGGLE

AGAINST SELF

[A SPIRITUAL DIMENSION]

QUR'ĀN

١. ﴿وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فِي أَنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

(And whoever strives hard (for the cause of truth) strives for his own (benefit). Surely, Allah is independent of (the obedience, submission and struggles) of all the worlds.)¹

٢. ﴿وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَتَهْدِيَنَّاهُمْ سُبُّلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾

(And those who strive hard (and struggle against the lower self vehemently) for Our cause, We certainly guide them to Our ways, and verily Allah blesses the men of spiritual excellence with His companionship.)²

HADITH

2.1 THE REAL STRIVER STRIVES AGAINST THE LOWER SELF

١-٥١. عَنْ فُضَّالَةَ بْنِ عُبَيْدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ يَقُولُ: الْمُجَاهِدُ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ.

¹ Qur'ān 29:6.

² Ibid., 29:69.

رَوَاهُ أَحْمَدُ وَالْتَّرمِذِيُّ وَاللَّفْظُ لِهِ وَابْنُ حَبَّانَ، وَقَالَ التَّرمِذِيُّ:

هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيفٌ.

1-5/1. According to Fuḍāla b. ‘Ubayd ﷺ: “I heard Allah’s Messenger ﷺ say:

‘The (great) striver is the one who strives against his own self (i.e., lusts, indulgences and luxurious pursuits).’”¹

Reported by Aḥmad, al-Tirmidhī (the wording is his) and Ibn ibbān. According to al-Tirmidhī, “This is a fine authentic tradition.”

(۲) عَنْ عَلَيٍّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ، قَالَ: أَوَّلُ مَا تُنْكِرُونَ مِنْ
جِهادِ كُمْ أَنْفَسَكُمْ.

ذَكَرَهُ أَبْنُ رَجَبٍ الْخَنْبَرِيُّ فِي جَامِعِ الْعُلُومِ وَالْحِكَمِ.

2. According to ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib ﷺ:

“(In the future) the first thing you refuse will be the striving against your (ill-commanding) selves.”²

Cited by Ibn Rajab al-anbalī in *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm wa’l-hikam*.

(۳) وَقَالَ الْإِمَامُ أَبْنُ بَطَّالٍ فِي شَرْحِ صَحِيفِ الْبُخَارِيِّ: قَالَ

¹ Set forth by •Aḥmad b. anbal in *al-Musnad*, 6:20 §23996. •al-Tirmidhī in *al-Sunan*, 4:165 §1621. •al-Bazzār in *al-Musnad*, 2:156 §3753. •al-ākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 2:156 §2637. •Ibn ibbān in *al-Šaḥīḥ*, 10:484 §4624. •al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, 18:256 §641. •Abū ‘Awāna in *al-Musnad*, 4:496 §7463. •al-Bayhaqī in *al-Zuhd al-kabīr*, p. 163 §369.

² Cited by •Ibn Rajab al-anbalī in *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm wa al-hikam*, p. 196.

عَلَيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: أَوْلُ مَا تَنْقِدُونَ مِنْ دِينِكُمْ جِهَادٌ
أَنْفُسِكُمْ.

3. Imam Ibn Baṭṭāl has elaborated in the commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*:

“According to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: ‘The first thing that will be lost (discarded) from your (practice of) *Dīn* is striving against your own selves.’”¹

(٤) عَنْ حَنَانَ بْنِ خَارِجَةَ، قَالَ: قُلْتُ: يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ! مَا
تَقُولُ فِي الْهِجْرَةِ وَالْجِهَادِ؟ قَالَ: ابْدُأْ بِنَفْسِكَ، فَاغْزُهَا؛ وَابْدُأْ
بِنَفْسِكَ، فَجَاهِهَا.

رَوَاهُ الطَّيَالِسِيُّ وَالْبَيْهَقِيُّ وَذَكَرَهُ ابْنُ رَجَبٍ الْخُثَبِيُّ فِي
جَامِعِ الْعُلُومِ وَالْحِكَمِ وَالْمِزَيِّ فِي التَّهَذِيبِ وَالْعَسْقَلَانِيُّ فِي
الْمَطَالِبِ.

4. According to Ḥannān b. Khārijah:

“I submitted: ‘O ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar! What is your opinion about migration and jihad?’ He replied: ‘Start it from your (lower) self and strive against it; then again start from your (ill-commanding) self and keep striving against it.’”²

Reported by al-Ṭayālīsī and al-Bayhaqī and cited by

¹ •Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 10:210–211.

² Set forth by •al-Ṭayālīsī in *al-Musnad*, p. 300 §2277. •al-Bayhaqī in *al-Zuhd al-kabīr*, 162–163 §368. •Ibn Rajab al-anbālī in *Jāmi'* *al-'ulūm wa al-hikam*, p. 196, and also in *Sharḥ hadīth Labbayk*, p. 128. •al-Mizzī in *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, 7:426. •Ibn 'Ajjār al-Asqalānī in *al-Matālib al-'alīya*, 9:238 §1928.

Ibn Rajab al-anbālī in *Jāmi' al-'ulūm wa'l hikam*, al-Mizzī in *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* and Ibn 'ajar al-Asqalānī in *al-Maṭālib al-āliyā*.

(٥) قَالَ الْإِمَامُ سُفِيَّانُ الشَّوَّرِيُّ: إِنَّمَا عَدُوكَ نَفْسُكَ الَّتِي بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْكَ. فَقَاتِلْ هَوَاكَ أَشَدَّ مَا تُقَاتِلُ عَدُوكَ.
ذَكَرُهُ ابْنُ بَطَالٍ فِي شَرِحِ صَحِيحِ الْبُخَارِيِّ.

5. According to Imam Sufyān al-Thawrī:

"Indeed, your enemy is the same (lower) self that lies between your sides. Strive against your lusts and appetites far more spiritedly than you do (in the battle) against your foe."¹

Cited by Ibn Baṭṭāl in *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.

2.2 STRIVING AGAINST (LOWER) SELF IS SUPREME JIHAD

٦/٢. عَنْ جَابِرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ، قَالَ: قَدِيمٌ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى قَوْمٌ غَزَاؤُهُ، فَقَالَ: قَدْمَتُمْ خَيْرًا مَقْدَمَ مِنَ الْجِهَادِ الْأَصْغَرِ إِلَى الْجِهَادِ الْأَكْبَرِ، قِيلَ: وَمَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ؟ قَالَ: مُجَاهَدَةُ الْعَبْدِ هَوَاهُ.
رَوَاهُ الْبَيْهَقِيُّ فِي الزُّهْدِ وَالْخَطِيبُ الْبَغْدَادِيُّ وَابْنُ عَسَاكِرٍ.

6/2. According to Jābir:

"A group of conquerors returned from a battle and came to Allah's Messenger ﷺ. He said to them: 'Congratulations on your return from the secondary jihad (fighting in the battlefield) to the supreme jihad (striving against the lower

¹ Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 10:210.

self).' It was submitted: 'What is the supreme jihad?' He said: 'Striving against lusts and appetites of (the ill-commanding) self.'"¹

Reported by al-Bayhaqī in *al-Zuhd al-kabīr* and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and Ibn 'Asākir.

٧-١٠-٣. وَفِي رِوَايَةِ الْغَزَالِيِّ فِي الْإِحْمَاءِ: قَالَ نَبِيُّنَا ﷺ لِقَوْمٍ قَدِمُوا مِنَ الْجِهَادِ: مَرْحَبًا بِكُمْ! قَدِمْتُم مِنَ الْجِهَادِ الْأَصْغَرِ إِلَى الْجِهَادِ الْأَكْبَرِ. قِيلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَمَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ؟ قَالَ: جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ.

7-10/3. According to the wording of a tradition reported by al-Ghazālī in *al-Iḥyā*:

"Our Prophet ﷺ greeted people who returned from a battle: 'Congratulations! You have returned from a lesser (*al-jihād al-aṣḡar*) to a supreme jihad (*al-jihād al-akbar*).'" It was submitted: 'O Messenger of Allah! What is the supreme jihad?' He said: 'Combating the desires and lusts.'"²

(٨) قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ أَبِي عَلْقَمَةَ لِقَوْمٍ جَاءُوكُم مِنَ الْعَزْوِ: قَدْ حِشْتُمْ مِنَ الْجِهَادِ الْأَصْغَرِ، فَمَا فَعَلْتُمْ فِي الْجِهَادِ الْأَكْبَرِ؟ قَالُوا: وَمَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ؟ قَالَ: جِهَادُ الْقُلُوبِ.

ذَكْرُهُ أَبْنُ رَجَبِ الْخَنْثِيِّ فِي جَامِعِ الْعُلُومِ وَالْحِكْمَمِ.

8. Ibrāhīm b. Abī 'Alqama said to the conquerors

¹ Set forth by •Al-Bayhaqī in *al-Zuhd al-kabīr*, p. 165 §373. •al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in *Tārīkh Baghdaḍ*, 13:523. •Ibn 'Asākir in *Tārīkh Dimashq al-kabīr*, 6:438. •Ibn Rajab al-anbālī in *Jāmi' al-'ulūm wa al-hikam*, p. 196. •al-Mizzī in *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, 2:144. •al-Suyūṭī in *Sharḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah*, 1:282 §3934.

² Set forth by •al-Ghazālī in *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-Dīn*, 3:66.

of a battle: “You have returned from a secondary jihad (*al-jihād al-asghar*); now (it remains to be seen) what you have done regarding the supreme jihad (*al-jihād al-akbar*).” They asked: “What is the supreme jihad (*al-jihād al-akbar*)?” He replied: “Striving by heart (that is performed against the base desires of the ill-commanding self).”¹

Cited by Ibn Rajab al-anbalī in *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm wa al-hikam*.

(٩) قَالَ الْإِمَامُ ابْنُ الْمُقْفَعَ: أَعْظَمُ الْجِهَادِ الْمَرْءُ نَفْسَهُ.

ذَكَرَهُ الْإِمَامُ الرَّاغِبُ الْأَصْفَهَانِيُّ فِي الْمُحَاضَرَاتِ.

9. According to Imam Ibn al-Muqaffa‘:

“The greatest jihad is striving against one’s lusts (i.e., base desires and lower appetites).”²

Cited by al-Rāghib al-Asfahānī in *al-Muhādarāt*.

(١٠) قَالَ الْإِمَامُ ابْنُ بَطَّالٍ فِي شَرْحِ صَحِيحِ الْبَخَارِيِّ: جِهَادُ

الْمَرْءِ نَفْسَهُ هُوَ الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْمَلُ.

ذَكَرَهُ الْعَيْنِيُّ فِي الْعَمَدةِ وَابْنُ حَجَرِ الْعَسْقَلَانِيُّ فِي الْفَتْحِ.

10. Imam Ibn Baṭṭāl maintains in the commentary on *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*:

“Striving against the desires of one’s self is the most perfect jihad.”³

¹ Set forth by •Ibn Rajab al-anbalī in *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm wa al-hikam*, p. 196.

² Set forth by •al-Rāghib al-Asfahānī in *Muhādarāt al-udabā’ wa muhāwarāt al-shu‘arā’ wa al-bulaghā’,* 1:613.

³ •Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 10:210. •al-Aynī, *Umda al-*

Cited by Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī in *'Umda al-qārī* and Ibn 'Ajjar al-Asqalānī in *Fath al-bārī*.

٤/١١. عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَا تَعْدُونَ الصَّرَعَةَ فِيهِمْ؟ قَالَ: قُلْنَا: الَّذِي لَا يَصْرَعُهُ الرَّجَالُ. قَالَ: لَيْسَ بِذَلِكَ، وَلَكِنَّهُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الغَضَبِ .
مُتَفَقُ عَلَيْهِ وَاللَّفْظُ لِسْلِمٍ.

١١/٤. According to 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

"Whom do you consider the champion wrestler amongst you?" According to the narrator, it was submitted: "The one who people cannot defeat." He said: "Not he, but a champion wrestler is the one who can exercise self-control when in rage (who defeats his own wrath)."^١

Agreed upon and this is the wording of Muslim.

١٢/٥. وَفِي رِوَايَةِ الْبُخَارِيِّ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصَّرَعَةِ، إِنَّمَا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الغَضَبِ .
رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَأَحْمَدُ وَالنَّسَائِيُّ فِي السُّنْنِ الْكُبْرَى وَمَالِكُ.

١٢/٥. Al-Bukhārī's report reads:

qārī sharḥ Sahīḥ al-Bukhārī, 23:87. •Ibn 'Ajjar al-Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, 11:338.

^١ Set forth by •Al-Bukhārī in *al-Sahīh*, 5:2267 §55763. •Muslim in *al-Sahīh*, 4:2014 §2609. •Ahmad b. Anbal in *al-Musnad*, 1:382 §3626. •Abū Dāwūd in *al-Sunan*, 4:248 §4779. •Ibn Ibbān in *al-Sahīh*, 7:214 §2950. •Ibn Abī Shayba in *al-Muṣannaf*, 5:216 §25378. •Abū Ya'la in *al-Musnad*, 9:96 §5162. •al-Bayhaqī in *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 4:68 §6937 & 10:235 §20874.

“Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: ‘The wrestling champion is not the one who conquers (the other wrestlers in the ring) but the one who reins in his ire.’”¹

Reported by al-Bukhārī, Ahmād, al-Nasā’ī in *al-Sunan al-kubrā* and Mālik.

٦/١٣ . عَنْ أَبِي ذِرَّةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ، قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: أَيُّ الْجِهَادِ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: أَنْ تُجَاهِدَ نَفْسَكَ وَهَوَاكَ فِي ذَاتِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى. رَوَاهُ أَبُو مُعْنَيْمٍ وَالْقَزْوِينِيُّ وَابْنُ عَسَاكِرٍ.

13/6. According to Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī ﷺ:

“I submitted to Allah’s Messenger ﷺ: ‘Which kind of jihad is most superior?’ He said: ‘It is to strive in the way of Allah ﷺ against your lower self and its lusts.’”²

Reported by Abū Nu’aym, al-Qazwīnī and Ibn ‘Asākir.

١٤-١٥ . وَفِي رِوَايَةِ عَنْهُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ أَنْ يُجَاهِدَ الرَّجُلُ نَفْسَهُ فِي اللَّهِ وَهَوَاهُ.

¹ Set forth by •Al-Bukhārī in *al-Šaḥīḥ*, 5:2267 §§5763. •Ahmad b. anbal in *al-Muṣnad*, 2:236, 268, 517 §7218, 7628, 10713. •al-Nasā’ī in *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 6:105 §10226, 10228. •Mālik in *al-Muwaṭṭa*, 2:906 §1613. •‘Abd al-Razzāq in *al-Muṣannaf*, 11:188 §20287. •al-Bayhaqī in *al-Sunan al-kubra*, 10:241 §20915. •al-Ṭabarānī in *Muṣnad al-shāmiyyīn*, 3:25 §1730, 4:184 §3066.

² Set forth by •Abū Nu’aym in *Hilya al-aawliyā’ wa ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyā’*, 2:249. •al-Qazwīnī in *al-Tadwīn fī akhbār Qazwīn*, 3:133. •Ibn ‘Asākir in *Tārīkh Dimashq al-kabīr*, 48:429. •al-Suyūṭī in *Jam‘ al-jawāmi‘* generally known as *al-Jāmi‘ al-kabīr*, 1:745 §137, 3807. •al-Hindī in *Kanz al-‘ummāl fī Sunan al-aqwāl wa al-afāl*, 4:185 §11265. •al-Albānī graded it sound in *Silsila al-ahādīth al-ṣaḥīḥa*, 3:483 §1496.

رَوَاهُ ابْنُ الْجَارِ كَمَا قَالَ السُّيُوفِيُّ وَالْهِنْدِيُّ وَالْمُنَّاوِيُّ.

١٤-١٥/٧. Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī also reported:

“Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: ‘The most excellent jihad is to strive against the (ill-commanding) self and its lusts in the pursuit of Allah’s pleasure.’”^١

Reported by Ibn al-Najjār, as mentioned by al-Suyūtī, al-Hindī and al-Munāwī.

(١٥) قَالَ الْمُلَّا عَلَيُّ الْقَارِيُّ الْحَنْفِيُّ فِي شُرْحِ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ:
وَهُوَ الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ، الَّذِي يَرْتَبُ عَلَيْهِ الْجِهَادُ الْأَصْغَرُ، وَمِنْهُ
كَلِمَةُ الْحَقِّ عِنْدَ ظَالِمٍ لِلنَّاسِ.

١٥. Al-Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī al-anāfi has interpreted this hadith report:

“And this is supreme jihad from which ensues secondary jihad. Moreover, saying a word of truth before a tyrant ruler also results from the same jihad.”^٢

١٦. عَنِ ابْنِ عَمْرِو رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَفْضُلُ
الْجِهَادِ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ فِي دَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغْيَانِهِ.

رَوَاهُ الْحَكِيمُ التَّرْمِذِيُّ وَالْمَرْوِزِيُّ وَرَوَاهُ الطَّبرَانِيُّ كَمَا
قَالَ الْهِنْدِيُّ وَذَكَرَهُ الْمُنَّاوِيُّ.

^١ Set forth by •Ibn al-Najjār as said by al-Suyūtī in *Jāmi' al-ahādīth*, 2:13-14 §3501. •al-Munāwī in *Fayd al-qadīr*, 2:31. •al-Albānī graded it sound in *Silsila al-ahādīth al-sahīha*, 3:483 §1496.

^٢ •Al-Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī, *Sharḥ Musnad Abī anīfa*, p. 371.

16-23/8. According to Ibn 'Amr ﷺ:

“Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: ‘He who strives against the base desires of (ill-commanding) for the sake of Allah ﷺ performs the best jihad.’”¹

Reported by al-akīm al-Tirmidhī and al-Marwazī, and by al-Tabarānī also as mentioned by al-Hindī and cited by al-Munāwī.

(١٧) قَالَ الْحَسْنُ: أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ مُخَالَفَةُ الْهُوَى.

ذَكْرُهُ الْبَغْوَى فِي الْمَعَالِمِ وَأَبْوُ الْمُظَفَّرِ السَّمْعَانِيُّ فِي التَّقْسِيرِ.

17. According to al-asan al-Baṣrī:

“The antagonism towards one’s own (ill-commanding) self is the most virtuous jihad.”²

Cited by al-Baghawī in *Ma‘ālim al-tanzīl* and Abū al-Muzaffar al-Sam‘ānī in *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*.

(١٨) عَنْ أَبِي الْحَسْنِ الْمَدَائِنِيِّ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَجُلٌ لِلْحَسْنِ: يَا أَبَا سَعِيدٍ! أَيُّ الْجِهَادِ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: جِهَادُكَ هَوَاكَ.

ذَكْرُهُ ابْنُ الْجُوزِيِّ فِي الدَّمَّ.

18. According to Abū al-asan al-Madā'inī,

“A person asked al-asan al-Baṣrī: ‘O Abū Sa‘īd!

¹ Set forth by •Al-akīm al-Tirmidhī in *Nawādir al-uṣūl fī ahādīth al-rasūl*, 2:234. •al-Marwazī in *Ta‘zīm qadr al-ṣalā*, 2:596 §634. •al-Tabarānī as said by al-Hindī in *Kanz al-‘ummāl*, 15:363 §43427. •al-Munāwī in *Fayd al-qadīr*, 2:49, and *al-Taysīr bi sharḥ al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaghbīr*, 1:188.

² •Al-Baghawī, *Ma‘ālim al-tanzīl*, 3:475. •al-Sam‘ānī in *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 4:194.

Which kind of jihad is excellent?’ He replied: ‘Striving against the passions of your (ill-commanding) self.’¹

Cited by Ibn al-Jawzī in *Dhamm al-hawā*.

(١٩) عَنْ ابْنِ الْمُبَارَكِ، قَالَ: قَيْلَ لِعُمَرَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ: أَيُّ
الْجِهَادِ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: جِهَادُ الْهَوَى.

ذَكْرُهُ الدِّينَوْرِيُّ فِي الْمُجَالَسَةِ.

19. According to Ibn al-Mubārak:

“Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was asked: ‘Which jihad is most virtuous?’ He replied: ‘Combating your lusts.’²

Cited by Abū Bakr al-Daynawarī al-Mālikī in *Mujālasa wa jawāhir al-'ulūm*.

(٢٠) قَالَ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ عَاصِمٍ الْأَنْطَاكِيُّ: أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ مُجَاهَدَتُكَ
نَفْسَكَ.

رَوَاهُ أَبُو نُعَيْمٍ فِي الْحُلْمِيَّةِ وَابْنُ الْجُنُوْزِيِّ فِي صِفَةِ
الصَّفَوَةِ.

20. According to Ahmād b. ‘Aṣim al-Anṭākī:

“The excellent jihad is your striving against the (worldly) desires of your self.”³

Reported by Abū Nu‘aym in *īlya al-awliyā'* and Ibn al-Jawzī in *Ṣifa al-ṣafwa*.

¹ •Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, p. 48 §50.

² •Al-Daynawarī, *Mujālasa wa jawāhir al-'ulūm*, p. 335 §1963.

³ Set forth by •Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilya al-awliyā' wa ṭabaqāt al-asfiyā'*, 9:283. •Ibn al-Jawzī in *Ṣifa al-ṣafwa*, 4:278.

(٢١) قَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ مُجَاهَدُ النَّفْسِ أَنْ تُجَاهِدَ
نَفْسَكَ عَنِ الْحَرَامِ عَمَّا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَعَنْ هَوَاكَ.
رَوَاهُ ابْنُ عَسَاكِرٍ فِي التَّارِيخِ.

21. Some imams hold:

“The best jihad is combating your (ill-commanding) self (attriting its desires). Protect your self from the unlawful that Allah ﷺ has forbidden and keep it from indulgences.”¹

Reported by Ibn ‘Asākir in *Tārīkh Dimashq al-kabīr*.

(٢٢) أَفَرَّ ابْنُ الْقَيْمِ بِأَنَّ الْجِهَادَ ضِدَّ النَّفْسِ أَصْلُ لِلْجِهَادِ ضِدَّ
الْعَدُوِّ:

لِمَا كَانَ جِهَادُ أَعْدَاءِ اللَّهِ فِي الْخَارِجِ فَرْعَاعًا عَلَى جِهَادِ الْعَبْدِ
نَفْسَهُ فِي ذَاتِ اللَّهِ، كَمَا قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: الْمُجَاهِدُ مَنْ جَاهَدَ
نَفْسَهُ فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ، وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَا هَجَرَ مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. كَانَ
جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ مُقَدَّمًا عَلَى جِهَادِ الْعَدُوِّ فِي الْخَارِجِ وَأَصْلَاهُ.

22. Declaring striving against one's self the origin of battle against the enemy, Ibn al-Qayyim (691–751 AH) holds:

“Combating the enemy on battlefields stems from a servant's striving against his (lower) self, in obedience and servitude to Allah ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘A striver is the one who combats (the lusts and desires of) his own self in obedience to Allah ﷺ, and an emigrant [al-muhājir] is he who eschews what

¹ Set forth by •Ibn ‘Asākir in *Tārīkh Dimashq al-kabīr*, 48:429.

Allah ﷺ has forbidden.' Therefore, striving against one's own self (inwardly) is prior to the fight against the enemy (on the battlefield), and this is its origin."¹

(٢٣) قَالَ مُحَمَّدُ الْأَلْوَسِيُّ الْبَغْدَادِيُّ فِي صَدَدِ الْجِهَادِ بِالنَّفْسِ:

مُجَاهَدَةُ النَّفْسِ وَهِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ مُجَاهَدَةِ الْعَدُوِّ الظَّاهِرَةِ كَمَا يُشَعِّرُ بِهِ مَا أَخْرَجَ الْبَيْهَقِيُّ وَغَيْرُهُ عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ: قَدِيمٌ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَوْمٌ غُرَاةً فَقَالَ: قَدِيمٌ خَيْرٌ مَقْدَمٌ مِنَ الْجِهَادِ الْأَصْغَرِ إِلَى الْجِهَادِ الْأَكْبَرِ . قِيلَ: وَمَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ؟ قَالَ: مُجَاهَدَةُ الْعَبْدِ هُوَاهُ.

23. According to Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī al-Baghdādī (d. 1270 AH):

"Striving against one's self is a greater jihad than fighting the enemy outside in the field. As learnt from the tradition reported by al-Bayhaqī and other scholars of hadith, on the authority of Jābir: 'Allah's Messenger ﷺ said to a group that returned from a battle: 'Your return from *al-jihād al-aṣghar* to *al-jihād al-akbar* (supreme jihad) is welcome.' It was submitted: 'What is the supreme jihad?' He said: 'A person's striving against the desires of his own self.'"²

¹ Set forth by •Ibn al-Qayyim in *Zād al-ma'ād*, 3:6

² Al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'azīz wa al-sabīl al-mathānī*, 17:209.